

BOB, THE SPANIEL


Blanche Shoemaker Wagstaff



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BOB: THE SPANIEL

Blanche Shoemaker Wagstaff



THE AUTHOR AND BOB

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BOB: THE SPANIEL

THE TRUE STORY OF A SPRINGER

By

BLANCHE SHOEMAKER WAGSTAFF

[Mrs. Donald Carr]

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NEW YORK

G. HOWARD WATT

1819 BROADWAY

1927

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Printed in the United States of America

FOREWORD

THIS story is a narrative of actual events in the life of my Springer spaniel. It contains no fiction whatsoever, but is based on notes taken over a period of some years' observation.

B. S. W.

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BOB: THE SPANIEL
THE TRUE STORY OF A SPRINGER

Chapter I

MEETING

BOB and I first met in Edinburgh. Edinburgh on a Sunday,—bells tolling golden music, and a soft light playing over the bronzed buildings of Princes' Street.

It was August and the parks were green. The city on Sunday wears a solemn air. The streets were full of people on their way to worship.

Bob was shy at meeting me. But only for a moment. He came into the hotel room led by his Scotch trainer. I could see splashes of brown and white, curtains of ears dragging on the ground, freckles on a broad muzzle, and two great appeal-

ing eyes looking up at me. He was down-cast and held his shaggy body low to the ground.

"The dog's nervous in the city, Ma'am," the man said, "he's never been anywheres but in the fields."

Bob was hiding his face behind a chair. But his eyes burned like brown coals.

"He's a bonny doggie," the apple-faced Scotchman said, "and he's had a grand training in the field."

No wonder the poor dog looked miserable. Fresh from the choke collar and a birch whip! I knelt beside him. He felt warm and soft and furry, and he put his little cold nose in the palm of my hand. Poor doggie, if only I could make him happy.

"Spaniels are merry little fellows, Ma'am, after you get to know 'em," continued the man, "but they don't take to everybody. His ancestry dates back to 1812,—and here are his papers."

MEETING

"His father is an unbeaten champion. Bob's a great retriever, a fine field and water dog,—greatest nosed dog in Britain."

Bob was looking up at me with his deep, searching eyes.

"Has he any special failings?" I asked.

"Oh, yes, Ma'am," the man answered readily.

I was prepared for the worst.

"He likes soft chairs and beds too much, I'm afraid."

"Is that all?" We both laughed heartily.

"Beautiful Bob," I said, stroking his broad, intelligent head. "We are going to be good friends."

Something in my voice seemed to please the little stranger. He turned his great eyes up to mine. Never had I seen a dog look so intently, so thoughtfully, so deliberately. Did he already realize I was waiting to devote myself to him? Was he in need of my friendship? It was a deli-

cate moment in our lives. . . . Then I felt a soft big paw feeling its way toward me, and he pressed his round, shaggy head against me. In that silent gesture I knew we were destined to be comrades.

With few further comments the trainer left us. We were alone. I was watching Bob. He looked first at me and then at the door. He listened. He seemed to be speculating. His head went from side to side, and then he sat down in a heap. He made no attempt to follow. An expression of surprise was on his face. He went slowly over to the window. Putting his paws up on the sill, he gazed down into the street. Then he made a faint, sharp whimper,—half-cry and half-bark.

That was all. But accompanying it was a quiet resignation, something he has taught me many times since. I wish men could accept life as spaniels do. . . . He put his paws down and came to my side to make friends. I could see he wanted con-

MEETING

solation, but he was reticent and afraid. How long would it be before I could make him forget the hardships of training, and revive in him the free, gay little dog-ways again?

Chapter II

SHIPBOARD

THE great steamer was making its way down the river from Southampton. The farewell tumult had died on the air.

"But Captain," I said to the formidable figure in gold braid before me, "I cannot put my dog in a kennel. It will break his heart. Do, please, make an exception in this case. I will be so grateful."

The dignified official shook his head. He was brief and very firm.

"Rules of the sea, Madam," he said, bowing gravely, "are not to be broken." The crisp English tones were very cutting. What a chasm lies between an emotional American and a maritime Englishman!

"But it cannot be"—I began on the verge of tears. Bob was close beside me, look-

ing up at him. His shaggy ears hung very low, expressing dejection. Did he know that his happiness was in our hands?

The Captain was waving me aside. He was very polite, but very positive. I could not refrain from a sudden realization of the comedy of my visit to the boat-deck of a giant liner to discuss my little friend, a dog! But it was all so serious that I felt only a vague derision in the back of my brain. For I was terrified at the thought of putting gentle, trusting Bob in a cold, lonely kennel on the top deck.

We had come to mean so much to each other. In over a month we had not been separated for a moment. The dog followed every footstep. He was my shadow,—my other self,—companion of my quiet hours. We had traveled from Edinburgh to London in a first-class carriage; he had stopped at the Ritz in London; he had romped on all the golf courses; he had explored Ken-

sington and Hyde Park; in both Scotland and England he was treated as an equal. For dogs are a part of English family life; America has much to learn in her treatment and understanding of them. Everywhere in the British Isles they are welcomed and respected. Little did I dream what I was to encounter in my own country.

Bob had become so dependent upon me that he could not bear to be out of my sight. I took my meals in my room to be near him; I humored him in every way possible rather than hear his pitiful moans of loneliness.

For the spaniel is a strange dog. His affection is his main concern; only the one he loves occupies him. He would rather live in a dungeon beside his master than in a free, wonderful region apart. His only wish is to live his master's life; to share his thoughts. There is no preoccupation with other dogs or people. In fact

Bob resented the presence of other dogs. They meant nothing to him.

Many who had owned spaniels had told me of their loss of freedom. For spaniels will neither eat nor sleep when left alone. They are inconsolable. There is no substitute, and this affection easily becomes a tyranny. I had listened to many extravagant tales of renunciation from my friends,—but they had always struck me as comic and absurd.

Now I was beginning to understand. Already the pleading eyes, with their deep, expressive language, and the beseeching spaniel ways had begun to demonstrate their hold upon me. And there were destined to be many changes, many surprises in store for me.

All these things were flashing through my mind as I left the Captain's quarters. I was determined that the rules of the ship should be broken. Running into my own stateroom, I locked the door, and hid Bob

in a corner. Then I breathed more freely. Perhaps I could elude the ship's policeman, whoever he was!

For a long time Bob and I did not stir for fear of discovery. He lay looking at me, and several times he licked my hand as if in gratitude for what I was doing for him. Outside I could hear the waves dashing about the big liner. We were heading out to sea. A wind began to moan and I thought of the dreariness of the dark kennel awaiting Bob. The moments slipped by. The heavy tremula of the engines began slowly, broodingly. . . . Six days before me, of this terrible anxiety!

Suddenly there was a knock at the door. I was discovered. A burly figure forced its way into the cabin.

"I am told, Madam, that you have a dog—" His voice was stentorian, commanding. He stood six feet, weighing over 200 pounds. He was the ship's butcher. He was dressed in white, with

great splotches of blood on his apron. He smelt beefy, and his round, rosy face bulged. To me he appeared like an executioner.

"Let us step outside a minute and discuss the matter," I said, pushing him toward the door.

"There is nothing to be said, Madam,— I must obey my orders."

Another inexorable! He followed me into the passageway. I slipped a crown into his fat fingers. But I could not tempt him. (A wonderful thing about Englishmen, and doubtless one of the mainstays of the Empire, is their inherent respect for the law. And it is not fear that engenders this; it is the result of generations of restraint and the inherited traditions of the country.)

As we stood talking in the passageway Bob began to whimper. Half moan, half bay, there is nothing (except perhaps the note of a coyote) as melancholy as a span-

iel's cry. It penetrates. It is desolation itself. No bark could express the misery and mutiny of this lonely howl.

"You see, Madam," the man began, "your neighbor could not stand such a nuisance."

Nuisance! What a word for Bob's expression of sorrow! I was exasperated. Flinging open the cabin door, I tried to protect Bob, but the man brushed past me and lifted him in his arms. Bob no longer resisted. He knew by my face that something desperate was happening. He lay limp and resigned, as we climbed the companionway to the upper deck.

The kennels were in a lonely part of the ship,—secluded and gloomy. The pathetic wails of the inmates greeted me. I saw row upon row of sad little faces, all with burning eyes, peering out of their minute prisons. The wind had increased to a gale, and a fine rain began to fall. The deck was deserted, and a gray dusk had

come. The voices of the dogs echoed dismally.

Bob must have had a premonition. He did not struggle. He was living again the resolution of our first day of meeting. I pushed him, tumbled into a pitiful little heap, through the cage of his kennel. He would not look at me, but sat humped up in a corner, staring at the ground.

"Bob," I said, "I will come back soon." He gave no signs of hearing me. His eyes had a queer, unnatural look, and he stared straight ahead. Quietly I told him all about it, through the grating that separated us. He must be patient and not pine for me. Was he listening? Was he blaming me?

I heard latches snapping. The wind came in great gusts through the doorway. In another moment I was standing on the deck, with the dark kennels shut from my view. It was miserably cold. I heard the butcher's voice saying as he dangled his

keys: "These span'els, Madam, they ain't like other dogs." He was deprecating and kind—I brushed him aside. Why did he always say 'span'els'? Far inside I heard Bob's low, desolate wailing. He seemed to be saying: "So this is my reward—I am forsaken. . . ."

I could think only of his eyes that glowed like yellow coals when I thrust him limply into the straw. . . .

That night about two o'clock I stole back to the kennels. I could hear the dogs crying as I came down the deserted deck. Far above the rest rose Bob's deep wailing voice. The door was locked, but I leaned against it to listen. As I did so he must have smelt me. For his crying increased in volume, and I could hear him throwing himself against the grating of his prison, again and again. Had he not slept? What were his thoughts? Was he condemning me for forsaking him?

Chapter III

COMPENSATION

EARLY the next morning I went out on the upper deck to see the butcher feed the dogs. Bob was tied to a life-boat as I came running toward him. I had never seen such joy—somersaults of happiness, and whimperings of greeting that seemed to have no end! He leapt a dozen times upon me, pawing me, curling his lips, cajoling. Much too excited to eat, he laid his head across my shoulder as if at last in perfect peace.

He seemed to be saying: "You will not leave me again, will you?"

"Your dog nearly had a convulsion crying for you," the red-faced butcher said cheerily, as he doled out great pots of steaming cereal.

"Some dogs' hearts break," I replied. To which my Nemesis gave his usual answer:

"Well, Madam, these span'els—"

But I was thinking of faithful Bob. Life is easier when we love less. . . .

The fresh morning breeze cheered our spirits. A calm sea was running, and the majestic liner was making her way like some great bird through the vast expanse of blue. . . . The air was sharp with brine, and the low even lilt of the vessel in the waves was beautiful.

Bob roamed up and down the deck, his ears flapping. He made sharp little barks of delight. His happiness was complete. Merely my presence sufficed. How wonderful is the devotion of a dog! Content with so little, a look from the one he loves and his heart is at rest. A word or a touch of the hand—and his empire of peace is established. How simple are his needs.

COMPENSATION

How great his gratitude. Man has much to learn from his dumb companion.

Each day thereafter I spent with Bob on a quiet section of a lower deck. He romped with children passing; he played with his little ball,—or he barked at the waves tumbling at the great ship's side. . . . I never knew anything so resourceful as Bob. He never fretted so long as I was beside him. When I read, he would lie by my chair in silence. And when the steaming tray came with my dinner, he only turned two large eyes upon me. He was too well-bred to beg for anything. He stood mutely by, awaiting my wishes.

How evident were the centuries of aristocracy behind him! Companion of gentlemen and kings, his bearing was the essence of good breeding. Food played only a small part in his life. He was not like any other dog. His meals were entirely dependent upon his mental state. In my absence neither meals nor water appealed

to him. And I never saw him eat ravenously like most dogs.

During this long week at sea with no exercise or freedom Bob must have longed for the green pastures. How his broad white paws must have yearned for the soft earth and the smell of the upland game. Did he think that his happy hunting days were over forever? The gun was everything to him. It is a tragedy to defeat a dog's instincts,—and I knew that Bob would never be happy without the gun.

The first time I showed him my English .410 (the pride of my life), his eyes blazed and he jumped up licking the barrel again and again. To a bird-dog the gun is everything,—and Bob must have known I would not deny him this joy.

Only the cruel nights in the kennel punctuated our sea voyage. Every evening I led him back to his cold, dark prison, and we repeated the sad little ritual of leave-taking. He paid no heed to his

yelping companions, but always humped himself in a corner.

What a lesson he was in forbearance! And before we had landed this trait had won for Bob many friends. Every one on the ship loved him—sailors and stewards, old persons and children, all came to do him homage. People would often approach me saying, “Is this the wonderful dog I have heard about?” Or— “May I see your spaniel whom so-and-so has told me of?” Bob’s unfailing good temper and gentleness, his playfulness and cheery ways made him a place in every heart.

But at last when the big steamer came in sight of the Battery, with the first breathless views of the white, shining city mirrored in the water, we rejoiced that we were nearing home. Past were the daily partings, and before us were the endless green meadows and wide-spreading woodlands of America. What dreams of game were my spaniel’s, as he stood scenting the

air with his keen nostrils! Did memories come to him of his vanished land—of moor and heather?

As we hurried from the crowded pier, jostled and confused, Bob was straining at the leash, eager for the new country of his adoption, happy that the long voyage was at last over.

Chapter IV

AMERICA

BOB'S first ride in a New York taxicab was most unique. Bewildered by the throngs of people, he sat in a corner of the vehicle, his head down and his whole attitude one of humiliation. He seemed to be saying: "I am a dog of the fields—why did you bring me here?" Tossing helplessly about, unable yet to balance himself in the pitching of the car, he looked the picture of despair. His ears hung low, and he would not look at me. The noise of the streets made a jangling melody.

We drew up at last before one of the large hotels. As we entered a porter stepped forward,—burly and officious. Was it the ghost of my shipboard Nemesis?

"Your dog, Madam," he said. "I will

take him to the cellar." Bob, still dizzy from the intricacies of the swing-door, stood meekly by.

"Nothing of the kind," I answered, pushing by him up to the desk. Here I was met with a like rebuff. "No dogs can stay in the hotel, Madam," the room clerk said coldly. I sent for the manager, a personal friend. He was equally obdurate. "It cannot be arranged," he told me, with some regret in his voice.

"But this is not a regular dog," I explained. "He is a hunting dog and my companion."

"If every lady brought her hunting dog to this hotel," the man said, "what a zoo we would have."

He, too, had no humanity; only rules, rules, rules—inflexible and foolish. Were not rules made for exceptions?

I took a hasty departure. And my experience was the same at every other hotel. Even at my own club on Park Avenue, a

flunky endeavored to put Bob in a cage by the entrance. I was exasperated. Where could I go? At last I thought of the St. Regis. There Bob was welcome, and received with kindness and consideration. We passed upstairs in the elevator, tired but happy. At last I had found a refuge for my poor doggie.

As we placed our things in our room it occurred to me how far behind Europe America was in her treatment of dogs. Here Bob was only a dog—an object hardly tolerated, at whom street urchins would shout as we passed, “Get out of the way, you mutt!” Only a dog! What meaningless words to those who do not understand. Only a dog, yet in many ways much truer, and wiser and kinder than man.

I knew that Bob could not be happy in the city. The noise and crowds disturbed him. He seemed cowed. What a strange terror he had of crowds! I have seen him stop in a crowded street and lie down on

the ground, pressing his nose hard against the stone. Was it so unbearable to him, and why was he afraid?

It was not without certain pangs of sorrow that I determined to abandon my city home. I liked the gray stone archways against the sky,—sunset lighting the windows with purple and rose,—the strange thunderous music of the Avenue—all these things had a fascination for me. So with a few tears, I packed my possessions for a leap into the unknown.

I remember that all I desired was Bob's happiness. For I knew that never again would I find so devoted a comrade, one who would bear with me and love me unto the end.

He would have perished in the city, not from fretting or dissatisfaction, but from an inward, instinctive need of the great outdoors. He neither ate nor slept in New York, lying most of the day in a corner, with his eyes in a fixed, sad stare. I could

see that his heart was breaking. All the gayety that I had fostered in him since we left Edinburgh, all the merry little playful ways departed. He sought dark places, hidden from the noise, and rarely played with his ball. The merry little chip-chip patter of his paws on a corridor I heard no more. He was pining away by the hour.

When I told him that soon we would be in the country, he would turn his big, dark eyes on me and swallow very hard. Sometimes the little tail would go tap, tap on the floor to indicate his satisfaction at the news.

When the luggage came down for our final moving, Bob began to take hope. He sat on every article and smelt and inspected each piece. He even got inside a dress-suit case to express his approval, and rolled a long time on my sweaters and stockings. To say further his pleasure, he tossed shoes and slippers about the room, retrieving everything he could find. For the spaniel

is a natural retriever. Proudly Bob bore newspapers and bundles in mid-air, often stopping the postman to ask for my packet of letters. This is an instinct of many generations, and each mother spaniel drills her little ones in the fine art of retrieving at an early age.

Bob loved our new home. A large Mission type of house with an old-fashioned garden, long halls where he could romp with his ball, and soft, thick rugs for him to roll on. Surrounded by evergreens and wide-sparkling lakes, meadows abounding in pheasant, grouse and rabbit,—it was a paradise of game.

But deeply Bob loved the fireside. The spaniel is a home-dog, he does not rove. He does not leave the doorstep, when the owner is away. Bob's feeling about our home was one of serious responsibility, and his protection of it was touching and romantic. No person passed unobserved. No intruder dared to enter. Not until a

stranger had been welcomed by us would he allow any one to pass the threshold. There were not any indications of temper—only a silent and determined resistance.

Bob loved quiet evenings. After a day's hunting he would lie before the fire, the flames flickering and an old clock ticking in the shadows. He always partook eagerly of our pastimes; he joined in our games of pool, or cards. How often have I seen him leap upon the pool table to get a better view of the game, and pursue the colored balls in their whirling pace from pocket to pocket! After a golf victory of my husband's Bob often rolled on his back in celebration on the eighteenth green—his eyes full of a subdued fire.

Books and writing also intrigued him, and if we became too much absorbed in a letter or reading, he would climb onto the desk or table, and put his paw across the pages. Was it jealousy or affection prompted these actions? For Bob was very

jealous in his own quiet way. But above all he wished to share everything that concerned us. His only sorrow was at being apart from our occupations. Tears or laughter, he must partake of all with us.

Bob was morose when we entertained friends in our home. Not that he resented their presence, but he knew that they monopolized the thoughts that should be given to him. He always discreetly welcomed any one we liked, but he would celebrate their departure by a happy roll or joyous, sharp bark. He certainly fulfilled the old adage of "Speeding the parting guest!"

Bob disliked functions. Several times, since we did not leave him alone at night, we had to take him with us where dancing was in progress. Once, objecting to one of my partners, he ran into the middle of the ball-room and I was obliged to cease dancing. Another time, amidst exclamations of amusement, Master Bob interrupted a large ball by searching among the dancers

for his master and mistress! Running to the couples, his nose on the ground, he tracked us to a corner. But only once did his disgust of functions lead him to hide in the cloak-room under a sofa.

One of the most remarkable examples of his home feeling and understanding occurred on a summer evening. The butler and maid, who had been very kind to Bob, were departing. Bob had watched them packing, and following them downstairs to the automobile, he seemed to realize he was losing two good friends. Once in the car, he paused, then jumped up on the running board and licked their hands in silent farewell. Then he climbed down and trotted quietly back into the house.

Bob's daily evening ritual consisted in a celebration after his dinner. This he rarely omitted. A succession of sharp, joyful barks punctuated a dinner roll, usually on the best velvet chairs or in a damask curtain in which he burrowed his

head, or in cushions and scarfs, tossing in all directions these delightful ornaments. His eyes full of a roguish laughter, he performed his little comedy with high glee,—looking up at us for approval. Was it only a celebration of his dinner (which really meant so little to him), or was it more the gratitude of a dog for his warm and happy home?

Chapter V

BARKS

DOGS speak to us in their own language. If we study their barks, there are many different interpretations. A bark has great variety.

Bob had many barks. There was the importunate bark when he wanted attention; there was the bark of hunger; the prolonged wail of unhappiness at being left alone. There was the loud, forcible bark of protection; a sharp rabbit-bark; a muffled bark in strange places where he seemed to know noise was forbidden; a bark of interrogation; a short bark of sympathy and understanding when he sensed illness or trouble, a sort of half-whimper.

There was the bark of fun, when carrying a ball or stick and inviting play; a bark

which announced other dogs and called to them across space; then two different barks of alarm—one shrill for an approaching animal, and the other raucous and persistent for a nearing human being.

Are not these but a small portion of the dumb creatures' vast language which strives to bridge the silence between man and his comrade, the dog?

Chapter VI

PREDILECTIONS

BOB had two predilections—babies and radio.

In Scotland mothers leave their children in care of spaniels. Bob stopped many babies on our walks together, putting his paws up on the carriage, and wagging his tail as he tried to lick their little faces. He always wanted to linger and watch babies. And if I joined in the demonstration, his interest would become too exuberant, which was the signal for me to move on.

Radio aroused his curiosity. He loved music, and would sit erect on his paws in his favorite soft-cushioned chair looking into space while the Philharmonic played some classical rhapsody. One evening a

canary sang over the radio. Bob was deeply puzzled and scanned the room, smelling the air for signs of feathered life. Another time, Frank Dole began an address on shepherd dogs and a remarkable thing occurred. Mr. Dole opened his talk with these remarks: "I am going to tell you of one of the finest breeds of dogs in existence." Bob was listening, and at these words he left his chair and stood under the loud speaker, looking up in silent protest. It is indubitable that dogs know the meaning of many words. Bob knew the discourse was on his canine brothers, and perhaps he resented the phraseology. He continued gazing into my eyes, and then he came over to me and rubbed himself against my feet.

"Of course, Beautiful Bob," I said, "these dogs are not better than you, and I do not love them at all."

But he was not satisfied. During the entire talk he punctuated Mr. Dole's re-

marks with restless postures and strange little grunts. These incidents seemed more than a coincidence.

In hotels, Bob had a most amusing way of climbing on the hat shelf and checking himself spontaneously with our coats as we entered the dining-room. This always caused great amusement amongst the guests, for he would remain immovable until we emerged to claim him. Then, once in our room, he always chose the best rug for a joyful roll, glad at his liberation.

Another enigma which puzzled Bob was the telephone. When I have called up from a distance, Bob has been lifted to the receiver. When he heard my voice he has begun barking as if he knew it to be mine! This occurred so often, and only with my voice, that I am inclined to believe he recognized the familiar tone over the wire.

Bob had an amusing array of toys—a ball which he rolled down the stairs; an old slipper which he tossed in celebration,

and a forlorn rubber bone which whiled away the hours.

One of his most curious daily habits, which he never varied for a period of years, after his usual good-morning salutation of licking my hand, was an examination of the clothes to be worn on that day. If sport clothes, they were smelt with a pleasurable wagging of his tail, for they signified a romp in the fields. If city clothes, having no delightful odor of grass or such anticipations for him, he retired to a corner, gloomy and depressed. Evening attire, signifying a long separation from him, was smelt with despondency as it meant leaving him for an evening's amusement. At these times his wails have aroused the neighborhood, and I usually found him in a state of great excitement on my return. Bob always resented my enjoyment apart from him, and at times his jealous offense has been so great that he would creep away as if to say: "How

could you be happy without me when my life is only at your side?"

Another of Bob's pet aversions is to see me dancing with my husband. He cannot understand gyrating to the notes of music, and he becomes a little terrified as we whirl around before him. When his patience is exhausted he leaps up between us, trying to end the mystery.

Bob's dependence upon me was unusual. Even in sports he watched over me, expressing his concern in swimming, by following through the water at my shoulder. He knew no pleasure apart from me. No tempting meal, nor any scent of game could lure him from his vigil of awaiting my return. His only wish, his only life, was to be at my side. He seemed to reflect my every mood, echoing a tear with a sigh, or smiles by a tap, tap, tap of his stubby tail. Companion of my quiet hours, as I so often called him,—who other than a dog would desire to share them?

Men are restless and self-seeking. But their dumb comrade knows no joy but at the master's side. No matter how dull or indifferent, he is content to share the solitude! Even in the woods, eager for game, Bob never forgot his duty of protection, racing to my side at a footfall or a strange voice. How many happy hours we have known together, Bob, my husband and myself, in the great shadows of hemlock trees,—beside singing streams or in moonlight on the snow,—long walks with the wind whipping frosty boughs, or warm summer noons when grouse were sending up the strange thunder of their wings from the thicket,—or when pheasants were rising, golden and red, with the musical whirr of their great plumes, from the marshland,—or when a covey of quail fluttered, a silvery cloud in the air. These were the unforgettable moments in our lives.

For long hours Bob and I have hidden in underbrush crow-shooting, waiting in

a blind for the dark sweep of wings against the sky. First the sentinel crow perches on a bough and inspects the region. Then he either gathers or disperses his dark army by guttural cries. Under hay and thicket, trembling with expectation, awaiting the crack of the gun so I could send Bob tearing across the meadow in search of "dead bird,"—magic words to his ears. Once only was Bob surprised in retrieving, when carrying a wounded crow back to me it turned and pecked at him. He seemed never to forget the affront, and always hesitated a little about picking up his black burden thereafter.

Next to feathered game, Bob was keenest on hunting rabbits. Their scent seemed to awaken in him something akin to frenzy, and I have seen him forget his stern Scotch training (much to my dismay), as he gave tongue up a hillside and through a thicket, to a speedy jack, matching him well in size. No finer sight exists (and none more

typical of the most beautiful sporting print), than to see my sturdy and furry spaniel with the speed of lightning following the scent of a rabbit, giving the short, sharp barks that announced he was not working on feathered game. Crashing through underbrush, tearing at breakneck speed, his nose to the ground, even our sport in duck-shooting (dramatic splendor that it was with its wild plunges and crack of the gun over water), could not equal Bob on a jack rabbit in the heart of a wild woodland!

Chapter VII

TROUBLE

ONE calm summer's day I heard a strange scraping sound at the veranda door, and heavy breathing. It was Bob, with a queer look on his face. The blood was streaming from his foot, and he was dragging himself along painfully. His eyes seemed to say: "Help me."

I took him in my arms, and saw that one of his stout, strong pads was bleeding from a cut. This time his energy had brought him to painful pastures. Poor brave boy—with what mute supplication did he look at me,—his breath coming fast, the pupils of his eyes dilated. How patiently he permitted my ministration, lying on his back, his face upturned as if in understanding,

occasionally swallowing hard in order to bear the pain as I bandaged the wound. Humble and grateful little patient, how many could learn from such resignation.

As I bathed and dressed his paw, he turned the most thankful glance upon me, licking my hand in silent gratitude. In all things Bob was supremely grateful,—a quality so few people possess. He did not forget a favor. If any one hunted with him, or walked with him, or helped him in sickness, he repaid with demonstrations of affection. Bob asked of his friends only their presence. Kindness bestowed was something to be cherished and never forgotten.

For days Bob lay seriously ill. I did not leave him, fearing tetanus from the infected wound. He ate nothing, and seemed to wish only quiet and slumber. His symptoms alarmed me; he was burning with fever. He would lie for hours on my couch, looking out on the moun-

TROUBLE

tains, immovable and suffering, his huge eyes fixed and melancholy. I carried him occasionally onto the lawn, but his pathetic efforts to walk on three legs (unlike most dogs), ended in a complete collapse. The heavy bandages pained him, and the paw was inflamed to twice its proper size.

At last I could bear it no longer. Symptoms of twitching alarmed me, and I called in the only veterinary within thirty miles. He was a man of eighty,—half-mad, but in his lucid intervals inspired by the alleviation of animal suffering.

I remember waiting by lamplight to hear his verdict. Tick, tick, went the old clock; drip, drip, the rain on the eaves. And a hoot owl called over the mountain.

"I think he will recover," the man said kindly. He left me half a dozen solutions of various colors and told me to come for him if Bob seemed worse. The infection

might be curbed. What blessed news!
Earth seemed full of rejoicing.

The old man's wagon creaked down the
road. I was alone with my little patient
and the dripping of the summer rain.

Chapter VIII

RECOVERY: IN CAMP

BOB was a submissive patient. He was always a little ashamed when anything befell him. In small things he freely begged assistance by a bark or a whimper, indicating a thorn in his foot, or any slight ailment. He craved sympathy, but his proud spirit resented demonstrations. As he grew able to limp about, having at last learned to hobble on three legs, I wondered if my keen bird-dog would ever spring game again as of old. . . . Visions of a lame doggie haunted me, and I dreaded the thought of Bob, with his passionate activity and love of the outdoors, limping through the rest of his days. I feared above all a club foot, which fre-

quently results from such a severe wound. Mercifully the swelling began to abate; and after what seemed to me an endless time, he could drag his little paw along the ground without wincing with pain.

One day we were crossing a golf course where a large tournament was in progress. Bob was limping along with difficulty, dragging the cumbersome bandages which bound his paw, when we came in view of a gallery of several hundred people. Not realizing a dog could feel ashamed of the grotesque wrappings which encumbered him, I continued. But Bob did not follow. With one swift pathetic look of appeal from his big brown eyes, he turned and ran with his head down and his ears flapping in the wind. Never had I seen a clearer demonstration of an animal's humiliation. Proud hunter that he was, intrepid and fearless in the field, he could not endure the ridicule of men.

At last the day came when the bandages

were removed. And when Bob's limp had entirely left him, we took him to a camp on a lake in New Brunswick. Here he had his first experience with the scent of big game. Bear and moose were plentiful, and Bob was hugely excited when he first smelt their tracks, near our cabin. With what delight he would plunge his brown nose in the large round tracks of a bear!

Bob enjoyed bass fishing in a quiet way. We took him every day in a canoe, and he sat hour after hour immovable, curled up in a thoughtful little heap, as if he knew it would be dangerous to jump about. When we fished from a rowboat, he seemed to understand he could move with some safety. O strange sagacity of a spaniel! He took great interest in my fishing, watching every cast, and wagging his tail with satisfaction as I hooked a bass. What a study he was during the play of a 3-pounder, his eyes a little sad since he had no work to perform, but the tap, tap,

tap of his stub tail telling me he was pleased at the performance. When no fish were biting, Bob was allowed to plunge into the lake and swim to shore, where he foraged about on the rocks to his heart's content. But always one keen eye was on the boat, for fear of losing me.

What is that strange faculty of a dog,—almost a second sight,—which enables him to know when the master moves, no matter what preoccupation, what seeming slumber possesses him? Have we not all seen the sleeping dog aware of an intruder's foot-step? or known him to start from a doze at the gesture of his master? Do these faithful creatures never really sleep, and are their lives merely dedicated to love and to vigilance? I have often felt how completely I could trust my life in Bob's hands. My safety was assured anywhere in his presence. The quick bark, the keen scent, the sharp sense of hearing,—these were my perpetual safeguards. These were his

armor for my protection—good, faithful little creature.

Sporting dog, the springer spaniel, yet gentlest of comrades, bravest and shyest of creatures, indomitable in the field, yet boldest of protectors, mildest and most peaceful in the home. Strange combination of sagacity and simplicity,—of courage and gentleness,—of gayety and seriousness,—what other animal possesses such contrasts, content in the quiet hours, yet keen in the excitement of the hunt.

Chapter IX

OUTDOOR ADVENTURES

IT was April, and the dogwood was coming in bloom. White and pink, it lined the sides of the lake with delicate colors, scenting the soft air with an exquisite essence. The willows were tipped with gold, and a few crocuses were lifting their golden heads through the moss. Some blue birds sang softly here and there, and the sky was dappled with cloud. What peace and wonder in spring's eternal miracle! each year so old,—so new,—each year awaited with such expectation in the heart of man.

Bob was making game ahead of me. He was a keen worker. In no field trail have I ever seen a dog with so remarkable a nose. It was genius. No living thing

escaped him. He never abated. At once intent upon his purpose, work with him was a passion. In the field he was a changed dog. Transformed from a mild, docile pet into an intensified, alert creature, no more untiring worker ever lived. His bird-sense was always a source of astonishment to us and to other hunters who saw him. He never wasted time, seeming always to know the exact spot where game was liable to be,—and I never saw him make a mistake. A stroll with Bob was always a lively and exciting adventure; his swiftly changing postures, his electrical activity, the gleam of his white feathers through a dark thicket, or his bronzed, clear-cut muzzle above the broom grass as he sprang the game. No covert was too heavy, no water too cold, no distance too great, no bramble too dense to daunt him. I have seen him rushing through thickets when hardly the white top of his nose could be seen, and only the snuffling of his breath

announced that he was working. What he loved most in winter was to break the ice of streams and lie in the cold water, panting with enjoyment. Leaping and rolling in the snow, these too were his cold-weather delights.

But now spring moved like a white wand over the fields and forest. . . . Bob was swimming in the stream. The eddies ran swift and circled around Bob's paws as he paddled through the amber water.

It was difficult swimming, for the current increased in speed, swollen by the spring rains. Bob swam without effort, his nose up and his ears floating on the surface. As he neared the shore I saw him scenting the air. Then he began digging in the bank. And as he dug, he paddled, and barked, and continued smelling. In little holes I could see muskrats had made their homes,—and Bob was in a paroxysm of excitement. How he achieved the four different accomplishments I do not know.

But the comedy often occurred to me afterward.

Hearing another splash, we were joined by a neighbor's dog, an inky, impish little half-bred terrier who had a great respect for Bob. I saw two beady eyes on the surface of the water, as the little fellow struck out with his thin paws. But soon there was a crisis. The little dog was unaccustomed to swimming and he began to founder. He paddled frantically. He gasped, and his eyes stared up in pathetic entreaty. He began to bob up and down. I could see that he was sinking. Bob was quite a distance from him, but in an instant he knew;—he dropped his work and with powerful strokes made his way toward the terrier. With one sure snatch of his soft mouth he grasped the helpless little dog by the back of the neck and bore him toward shore. In another instant the two comrades were shaking themselves on the bank beside me. Bob stood by the

dripping and exhausted little stranger, barking with satisfaction at his achievement.

Then Bob like a streak was off downstream. I could see his sturdy body swimming on and on in the brown lapping water, and I sat down on the bank to enjoy the peace and plenitude of spring. The bird songs were liquid, the air full of perfume. O spring, what is your magic and your mystery? Why do you forever enchant the heart of man with dream and loveliness?

Wind stirred in the budding trees, and the frail voices of the birds sounded soft and sweet. On the river I saw a dark speck returning to me. It was my Bob,—Bob the intrepid, Bob the adventurous, Bob the wonderful! He was swimming slowly in midstream. As he neared me I saw he was carrying some plumed object. At first it seemed like the dragging of his big ears on the surface of the water, but as he came

to the shore I realized he had a duck in his mouth.

Oh, Bob, dog of surprises,—shall I ever forget how proudly you mounted the bank, bringing me the duck in your soft pouch of a mouth! The bird was unruffled and unhurt. Bob looked at me anxiously as he set it down beside me. He seemed to be saying: “A good piece of work, is it not, for a long swim?” And so it was. Hardly had I turned to examine the frightened feathery creature, when with a flutter it was off down the river to rejoin its invisible companions. Bob did not try to follow. He lay on the bank thinking—his head on his paws, and his eyes far away. At those times his ears fell very low, and he seemed to be intensely serious. . . .

A trout darted from under a log, and I heard Bob dashing off into the thicket, breaking the bushes as he ran. I could see him working on some scent in the distance—the laurel shining green about him.

Presently the patter of his padded paws. He held in his mouth another trophy. This time it was a duck's egg, evidently stolen from a nest. Gently he laid it on the soft turf beside me, unbroken! I had heard of training Springers in Scotland with eggs, but it always seemed a fable. Here was the reality.

"Bob," I said, "that is a wonderful piece of retrieving. But the egg must go back to the nest—spaniels never steal." I took the egg in my hand and he led me some way onward. There in a clump of bushes was a soft, warm mass of twigs, and together we returned the egg to its nest.

Chapter X

DANGER

WE were in New Brunswick, following a trail of eight miles through the woods. Returning at midnight, without a moon or stars, the darkness was inky black. There were four in our party, and but one small searchlight to guide us. The trail was faint from continued rain, and we were frequently stopped by fallen branches and broken boughs of trees. The woods were full of bear, moose and wild-cat.

Suddenly we saw our guide throw up his hands. He made an exclamation and we all stopped short. He had missed a turn, and the trail was lost.

In these woods men had been lost and wandered for days. I knew the danger,

but I said nothing. We retraced our steps through the darkness, but with no success. Some fork in the path had been ignored. We were lost in a vast wilderness. . . .

A fine mist began to fall. We were all tired and despondent. There was not even the rim of the sky visible or an archway of trees as guide. Only darkness impenetrable and sinister. Boughs crackled about us. We could hear Bob on the scent of some wild thing, barking far away. Then suddenly he must have sensed our danger, for he came racing in at a rapid pace. I could feel his cold nose in the palm of my hand, and he sat down very close beside me. He knew something was wrong.

We stood together in the inky darkness, discussing what was to be done. Should we wait till daybreak and then return to search for the lost trail? My friends' voices were dull and despondent. What were we to do?

Suddenly I thought of Bob. He could

help us. He had never failed. Dogs had been known to find their homes over vast territories. It was worth attempting.

"Bob," I said firmly, taking his face in my two hands as I always did when I wanted him to do an especially difficult piece of work. "Bob, you must take us home." I purposely used only five words, words that I knew were familiar to him. "Home" was a vital word. Surely he could not misunderstand! The command in my voice, and the gesture for him to "hie off," should be sufficient.

I heard him beginning to work. His stubby body crashed around through the bushes for a few breathless moments. He was picking up the scent with his old familiar snort.

Silently our little band followed the dog. He took us back quite a distance, then seemed to veer sharply in some direction. There were several gyrations, and we became a little discouraged, fearing he

was working on some game scent. . . . The moments slipped by. No one spoke. We groped onward, following the sound of the dog's breathing and the swishing of his footsteps before us. I seemed to feel the growing impatience and disdain of my companions. Was Bob baffled? Was he, after all, wiser than men? Were his instincts fallible, after all? I never doubted. I knew my dog.

We were walking slowly, warily, Bob working to right and left of us. The tenseness increased. Our nerves were at a breaking point. Where were we going? If only Bob could speak to us and assure us we were not following deeper and deeper into the forest.

Suddenly I heard Bob snorting triumphantly. He seemed to be sampling the air with terrible intensity. I felt him spring upward in the unmistakable manner which he has when he is close upon a scent.

His speed increased, and we found our-

selves hurrying to keep up with him. I had to call him in several times, for his eagerness was carrying him away. Closely we pursued; on into the impenetrable night—our lives in the hands of a little dog, a little dog who was working his heart out to bring us to safety.

Yes, he had recognized the word he loved,—home. And he was taking us there as fast as his legs could carry him. There was no mistaking now. Before long our searchlight told us we were again on our lost trail. And before another half hour we saw a light shining through the trees—the light of our cabin window. Bob, the faithful spaniel, had delivered us. He had taken us home!

Chapter XI

THE PAST

DREAMS of heather hills and the moors purple in the sunset. Fields bordered by gray crags. Great reaches of valley stretching into the distance. Wild, sweet-smelling marshes and swaying golden gorse. Mile upon mile of memory. . . . Playful hours of youth and freedom.

Who can separate himself from the past? Did Bob, too, dream of the days of his youth in Scotland?

One day my husband and I took Bob to a tailor shop. Bob detested shopping. It humiliated him, and his way of expressing this was to lie flat on the floor, his face toward the door, sometimes barking, sometimes with a fixed expression of disgust.

Trifles were not suited to his temperament.

We were in the department of real Scotch tweeds. On a long counter lay yards of recently imported woolen stuffs. Bob began sniffing them. And as we viewed the various materials, he jumped up on the counter and began to roll in the Inverness cloths. What did their odor awaken in the little dog heart? As he sniffed did he remember? Did his young days recur to him as he rolled in the soft materials?

Reams of stuff were turned over and over in his amusing exploit. Burrowing and half barking, sniffing and rolling, what images arose in him none will ever know. Memory had conquered in one great wave of recollection.

Chapter XII

BETRAYED

BOB'S faith in his forest companions was destined to be shattered.

On one of our walks we came upon a sand quarry. Emerging from some brush, I saw a fat woodchuck. Bob ran to meet the creature with his usual cordial and trusting bound. But the woodchuck was in no friendly humor. With a quick movement it leapt at the dog, gripping him around the throat. Woodchucks kill squirrels and dogs, and their sharp, pointed claws are known to inflict injury upon many animals. I saw the woodchuck and Bob rolling backward and forward in an angry embrace—a mimic battle. On the edge of the quarry the two figures swayed

for an instant, and then toppled down the embankment.

With a cry I ran forward, and saw two little plump figures, locked together, rolling over and over down the sandy incline. At the bottom of the quarry they fell apart as if stunned by the fall, and I saw my doggie rushing toward me as fast as his legs could carry him. Once at my side, distressed and worried, he sat looking down at the place of the encounter, as if pondering upon its significance.

But this was not his only disillusionment. Fly-casting at sunset one summer evening on a mountain stream, Bob was enjoying the play of the trout line as he ran along the bank beside us. He never failed to watch the trout landed. He would inspect it carefully, smelling it all over, as if reluctant he had not partaken of the sport. Attracted by what seemed to be a chipmunk hole, he began digging in a stone fence near-by,—one of his mer-

riest amusements. He seemed absorbed in his pastime. I watched him from time to time as I played my line on the amber eddies of the stream.

Hearing a raucous bark, which usually signified annoyance or danger, I looked up to see Bob wincing and shaking his head in a dubious manner. Then he began backing away from the stone wall, rolling his head on the grass as if to rid himself of something obnoxious. I did not guess at once,—then suddenly I realized it had been an encounter with a skunk!

In another instant my wise spaniel darted down the bank into the river. Nature had advised him, and with frantic leaps, he swam and swam in mid-stream, as if trying to rid himself of the nasty drenching. I held my sides with laughter.

Bob remained a long while in the water. He emerged shamefaced and humiliated, his tail low between his legs. He shook himself a dozen times, and went

away and stayed very still in the long grass. He was evidently mystified. But it would be a lesson for him to remember all his life.

Returning with him in the motor, he was a forlorn object. He sat in a drenched heap in a corner of the seat, ashamed and disconsolate. I bathed him with tar soap when we arrived home, but it was several days before he seemed to be himself. His pride had been touched. A proud sporting spaniel worsted by a skunk! What would his Highland trainers say to such an episode? Bob will never play with a wood-pussy again!

Chapter XIII

BOB SAVES A LIFE

I HAVE often wished that I had the memory of a dog. Man, in his evolution to a higher form, has lost some important and elemental powers. Much of the discernment of natural things is still evident in the Indian,—in his sense of direction, of time, of self-protection, and in his ability to exist alone in a wilderness. But in educated man certain natural discriminations have left him.

Frequently Bob surprised me by his power of recollection. Dogs have been known to remember incidents for many years. Two houses that we had occupied and abandoned, on returning after a year, Bob remembered instantly. What is this

strange, unaccountable memory possessed by the dumb creature? After traveling for days, on emerging from a sound sleep, Bob has recalled immediately a former abode, running excitedly from room to room in happy recollection.

Who has attempted to solve the mystery of the homing pigeon, or the dog returning thousands of miles across country to his hearthside? What guides them in these great adventures? It is not a visual or olfactory sense. It is some infallible instinct beyond the understanding of man.

As an example of recollection, a little dog playmate of Bob's lost his collar in the winter woods. Many months afterward, when the sleet and snow had left the grass, we were taking a familiar path and I saw Bob emerging from a thicket with something in his mouth. He was so excited that I immediately examined his possession, and was astonished to find that it was the battered leather neck-band of his little com-

rade! Consider the discernment necessary for this achievement.

On several occasions Bob has notified us of midnight fires in the neighborhood. No smoke escapes him, and I have been awakened to find him peering out of the window, his paws on the sill, barking with a strange, shrill and specific danger bark. Nor has he been satisfied until I have gone with him to the scene of the fire, where he could see that the families were aroused and the firemen subduing it! Strange and incomprehensible are the wisdom and reasoning of a dog.

But the strangest episode of this kind occurred one winter day. I was writing in my room, when I heard loud, anguished wails of distress from a far part of the house. The barking continued until I sought him out, and what was my astonishment to see him lying across the prostrate form of my husband who had fallen

a whole flight of stairs from the attic above! Bob was looking into his closed eyes, and licking his white face. The shock was so great that I nearly fainted, but summoning help we moved my poor husband to a couch. He had lost consciousness and we found that he was badly bruised. Seeing my grief, Bob busied himself expressing his sympathy by many demonstrations. His concern was pathetic. I could not move him from my husband's side, and not until my husband had recovered his strength sufficiently to raise himself and smile at the dog, was Bob even partially comforted.

These little events, so full of beauty and devotion, renew our faith in the sublime. We have no need to question the reality of love, or of its immense force in daily life. Truth comes to us in comradeship with the dumb wonders of nature. Innumerable are the virtues that have been revealed to me

through my association with Bob. Had men but the loyalty, the devotion, the unselfishness, the silent faith and the uncomplainingness of a dog, how wonderful would be this world, how few its problems or perplexities.

Chapter XIV

A GARDEN

OUR home was bowered by a beautiful garden. Blue-jays, thrushes, meadow-larks and song-sparrows twittered in the trees. Sunlight played in the spruce boughs. Squirrels and chipmunks had nested in the eaves of our house, and at daybreak and twilight the songs of many birds filled the air.

It was spring, and the birds were busy protecting and rearing their little ones. Fluttering and chattering to and fro in this supreme and musical season of their lives, the garden was a lively scene.

Bob loved the garden. He would never injure nor chase any diminutive wild life, for he seemed to understand their help-

lessness and his superior strength. His gentleness and judgment in such things were extraordinary. A bird-dog distinguishes invariably between game birds and the little feathered creatures of a garden.

In the garden Bob was master. But he ruled gently over his green domain. It was enclosed by a hedge and rustic fence, and he considered the territory his very own to guard and enjoy to his heart's content. Strangers were never allowed to enter until we had signified our acceptance of them,—and he wisely differentiated between our friends and those unknown. Early mornings Bob raced in the sunlight, tossing sticks and chasing balls. His playground was his special delight, and his gay rompings lasted until the first stars shone through the lilac-boughs.

One afternoon a heavy thunderstorm arose. The trees swayed in the wind and the sky was dark and lowering. Bob dreaded thunder, and a few peals rent the

air. As we stood in the doorway watching the blown leaves and twisting boughs, a tiny bird's nest fell from a tree. At once Bob saw what had occurred, and true to his training ran forward to inspect the bird-life. Knowing his gentleness, I could trust him to approach without harming the nest. "Fetch," I called. At this he lifted the little nest and brought it to me, tenderly in the soft pouch of his mouth. I took it from him, and not even a wisp was disturbed. Within was one lonely and drenched little bird—the picture of despair. Its wild, staring eyes looked up at me, and it was only a bit of skin and bone. It had almost perished. What was I to do? Had it been abandoned by the mother?

At this moment I heard the infuriated screeching of a bird. Looking up in a tree, I saw a blue-jay, peering down at us with angry glances. Her eyes were bulging with fury, and I at once realized she must

be the mother-bird. Her anger increased, and she began to circle menacingly about Bob. I had heard of the ire of blue-jays, and how they had been known to blind squirrels and human beings by their infuriated pecking. Bob was in danger. But how could he know? The sinister bird grew bolder and bolder, and with a rush I ran over and put the nest in a tree. As I laid it down, the birdling took one long gasp and expired. Poor little songster! Too frail for this world. How slight is the thread of life, how simple its ending.

Then I hurried Bob into the house. I noticed he suspected something, for he stayed close at my heels, his ears pressed low on his head, and his tail down.

But this was not the end of the garden tragedy. The mother-bird continued her persecution. Evidently assuming the dog

had been the cause of her bereavement, she pursued him whenever he entered the garden with menacing shrieks, circling around his head and pecking at him furiously. Her actions were so sinister that for several days Bob hesitated to go into the garden.

The bird's screeching cry was so hysterical and continual that the neighborhood became aware of it, and poor Bob's discomfiture was widespread. I shall never forget his humiliation; timidly, furtively, he would creep into the garden, looking to see if his pursuer had departed. Then raucous tones would announce her presence, and sheepishly he would run back into the house again, conquered in his own domain.

But all things end. So the angry mother's cries diminished, and her painful vigil terminated. Finally, she must have departed when her grief subsided, satisfied perhaps that she had done her duty. I

never saw her afterward. But Bob has remained wary of blue-jays, and when he sees them he looks at them thoughtfully and moves away to another end of the garden.

Chapter XV

MOOSE

THE paddle dipped noiselessly in the scarlet waves of the river. The sky was lavender and rose where the sun was sinking. White birch fringed the shore, like snowy arrows piercing the water. The canoe cut the waves with gentle rhythm. Nothing stirred.

Bob lay very still in the boat. We drew into a shaded pool. The only moving things were the shifting colors on the water. Minute after minute they flared and flamed and paled and quivered.

The sun faded. The sky turned to silver. Darkness crept around us in mist and shadow. The forest turned to violet. The white trunks of the trees shone like ghostly

wands. Suddenly we saw a figure bronzed and immobile, silhouetted against the sky. It stood at the water's edge, majestic and noble, its great antlers arched in a golden frame. Unforgettable moment of silent grandeur! Vision of the past ages risen before us in the twilight . . . only for an instant. And it was gone. We heard a crashing of underbrush as swiftly it tore through the forest. We were seen. We were scented. Man, forever enemy of the moose, how feared is your presence! In another moment the woods had enveloped the noble creature. His image was but a fleeting dream.

A faint mist began to fall, scented and soft. We decided to spend the night in the forest. Soon we had a fire sending its red lances into the sky. Our simple meal cooked over the coals, of coffee and bacon, was fit for the gods. The smell of the river and the sweet woodland odors enveloped us. Cool and delicious, the night air sur-

rounded us. The trees bowered us in their wide, soft embrace.

Night, still and magical—night in all its beautiful, eternal mystery. Bob lay before the fire, his head on his paws, thoughtful and wondering. His white coat and the clear cameo of his face shone in the firelight. Little comrade, of what do you dream, in the long hours of silence?

Poets sing of mossy beds and scented boughs. No Shakespeare or Marlowe could have pictured a lovelier Eden, a more perfect woodland idyl. . . . But as we lay on our improvised couch of moss and hemlock, a heavy rainfall began, and the wind turned chill. We had no coverings. We began to suffer with the cold. Poor frail humanity, unable to rise above its physical shortcomings!

Bob grew anxious. He hovered about me, licking my face and disturbing my efforts at sleep. Did he fear for my safety?

Or was he longing for his own warm fire-side?

The rain fell insistently. I continued to suffer with the cold. My teeth chattered. My husband slumbered peacefully. Bob was restless and watchful. What did he know? What did he fear? Boughs crackled in the forest and I heard strange, unfamiliar sounds around me. The river lapped the shore. The last coals of the fire had died, and only Bob's eyes glowed in the darkness above me. Occasionally he poked me with his paw.

Then a sudden idea struck me. Bob did not wish us to remain. He was breathing and swallowing hard as if to attract my attention. He wanted me to return.

When he saw us gathering up our things he was jubilant. Romping ahead of us with leaps of glee, he circled into the canoe with joyous abandonment. Had he heard the word "home?" Oh, precious word

that meant more to his little dog-heart than all the world!

As the canoe pushed off shore, Bob heaved a sigh of joy. Trouble had been averted by his wisdom. For as we paddled in sight of land, we heard the roar of thunder in the distance. Terrific rain fell. We could hear boughs crashing and waves whipping in the wind. Just as we reached the warm shelter of our cabin, the storm burst in all its fury. What misery we had escaped in our cold bed of boughs by the sodden fireside!

In the lamplight Bob gave several sharp whimpers of delight. This he only did after special stress or separation. He was happy to be back,—contented that we were safe. With one bound he leaped into the softest, downiest part of my bed. Then he turned and looked up at me as if to say, "Safe, safe, at last."

Chapter XVI

TRAVEL

MY enjoyment of travel is greatly discounted by Bob's dismay. Seeing our luggage he immediately becomes very anxious. He climbs into a valise or trunk as if in silent protest at our departure. He never quits the bags until they are carried out, when he follows close beside them. But the real joy of traveling is telling the little dog-heart that "to-day we are going back home."

What pages could be written of the long trips in which we have shared the baggage car,—filled with trunks and mail sacks, even coffins. Deafened by noise, cold, dirty, train-sick, rather than leave Bob alone we have spent days sitting on boxes in strange places.

On one journey homeward, when we were traveling by motor, the engine stopped. My husband had to walk several miles toward our house for assistance. It was midnight and a full moon shone on the snow. The spot was deserted and wild. Bob was capering about in the snow, lapping water from a stream, when my husband spoke to him.

"Bob," he said slowly, "you must stay behind to guard the car." He made no gestures to convey his wish that the dog should remain behind. But Bob understood. All his play-spirit vanished. He looked from one of us to the other. Stern duty confronted him. At once he was transformed. His only evidence of longing to go with my husband toward home was a few steps taken after the retreating figure. But he did not waver. In those few footprints in the snow I read all the dear desire of the little dog-heart. . . . Then he turned and walked solemnly and

slowly back to the car. It was a pathetic drama of the conflict of duty and desire.

Quietly Bob perched himself on the running-board of the car. He received no command. He merely knew what was expected of him. Sometimes he looked up at the moon; sometimes I surprised a sober concern in his face. He seemed scarcely to breathe. He was my guardian. I felt absolutely safe. Patience and resignation, courage and acceptance—what golden keys to the wonders of life!

The snow crunched under approaching footsteps. . . . The moon was in a cloud. Shadows enveloped us. Bob was on his feet in an instant. He ran forward bristling, his loud bark echoing through the stillness.

But I was not afraid. I trusted Bob. He stood baying in the snow, his body quivering with indignation. Then I saw a figure coming over the hill. I knew I was perfectly safe,—but who could it be?

It was a workman come to assist me in advance of my husband. But I had difficulty in explaining to Bob that a stranger at such a time of night in so lonely a spot, meant no harm. The dog was suspicious and sniffing until the man had taken the wheel of the car, and quietly made himself known to me. I only restrained Bob by his collar, for he had no trust in strangers at midnight under a cold white moon.

Chapter XVII

SICKNESS

PERFECT health cannot always endure. Bob came of such fine stock that I never could picture him ill. His strong-muscled frame, his powerful chest, his regular food, and the mileage he covered daily seemed to me to make him superior to disease.

But it happened otherwise. June set in humid and stifling. The sandy soil and the dry pines seemed to contain and intensify the heat. The thermometer hovered around 100 degrees. There was no relief at night. Not a breeze stirred. People sought the woods so they could sleep; many slept by the lake. The suffering was intense. Bob seemed wiser than men. He ate little, moved little, and drank

a great deal of water. At night his breathing made it impossible for him to lie down elsewhere, so he sought relief on the stone floor in the vestibule. Every few hours during the night I stood him in the bathtub and immersed him in cool water. His heavy coat added to his misery. He seemed to be struggling to breathe, and his eyes had a pathetic stare.

We went to New York, as I was told that a breeze arose during the torrid nights. But there the pavements were scorching and Bob ran from room to room, his pupils dilated and his tongue hanging out. Then a crisis came. We returned to the country. But one day he did not get up at all. He lay inert, scarcely breathing, in a dark corner. His heart beat fast and unevenly.

No word could arouse him. He refused food and drink and lay without moving. The heat continued. Everything in New Jersey was burnt like the tropics. But Bob—my Bob,—the precious companion

of my quiet hours, little counselor and friend—Bob lay dangerously still in my arms.

Death is such a sudden visitor that we rarely know when he is at our door. I was alone with Bob, twenty miles from a veterinary, and there was no time to be lost.

I called New York on the telephone, and fortunately a doctor was able to advise me.

"Heat prostration," he said quickly, after I had explained the symptoms. "Very common in dogs. I will give you a prescription for his heart and respiration."

My feet took wings. The old country chemist I visited looked at me from under his glasses.

"But the size of this dose," he began measuredly and suspiciously, "who is it for? Any one in your family?"

"My dog," I answered. "Be quick, please."

"Oh, only a dog," he replied. Yes, only a dog. What a futile phrase, but how much more than those mere little words!

I waited with beating heart . . . strychnine and digitalis—strychnine—digitalis. Would he never give me the medicine? If I only knew how Bob was feeling. If I only knew that his heart had not failed him and that he was awaiting me, with his great brown eyes glad in welcome, and his tail tap, tap, tapping on the floor. . . .

I found him just as I had left him. Not even his eyelids quivered at my approach. I felt his heart. It was barely beating. I gave him the dose of medicine, lifting him up in my arms, and holding him a long while. . . . The slow waiting for his heart to revive. I could just feel it against me, in a slight tremolo.

Somewhere a clock struck out the dark hours. We still sat together in a corner of the room.

Then it was time for another dose. Still

no improvement. But as long as I felt his heart stirring I had hope. Only his dull glazed, half-open eyes met mine. And the hours slipped by.

After the third hour Bob stirred, stretched himself, looked up at me. Then he licked my hand with a weak and wobbly little lick, in his way of gratitude.

Did I feel his heart beating stronger? It seemed almost too good to be true! He rolled over and raised himself.

Presently he walked weakly toward the garden. Once outside, under the trees, he gave a funny little staggering bound after a squirrel. Could it be possible?

He was better! The old instincts were reviving. . . . He moved around slowly, stretching himself. I sat and watched him with a grateful heart.

After that he improved steadily. The weather changed, and with the first cool breezes, he seemed to become a different dog.

Chapter XVIII

ENCOUNTER

THAT “a cat may look at a King” is an old saying. But that a cat may hold a group of people at bay is a strange fact.

One day we entered a small bakery shop with Bob. Suddenly we heard a commotion. Swishing, hissing, scratching behind the counter. A wee, gray cat emerged, back arched high, ready to spring. Her fur stood erect and her eyes blazed. She was personified fury. Bob stood before her amazed and playful, his head low as if ready for a caper. Then a terrifying thing occurred. The cat made a wild dash for the dog, her claws spread, and her body tense with anger.

I only recall a fearful skirmish,—panic

in the shop—shouts,—barks,—spit-fire and flying fur. My hands smarted from scratches and the blood ran. It was a blind struggle. I feared mostly for Bob's eyes. A dog is often helpless when a cat is perched upon his back. But we emerged. Dragging him out on the street, we saw the cat still defiant and desperate, arched against the wall. It was all so sudden we hardly knew what had happened.

Afterward I learned the cat was merely protecting her kittens, which were in a basket under the counter. Such are the glorious instincts of motherhood.

Chapter XIX

A BIT OF NATURE

NATURE studies of Burroughs or Thoreau. Each day there was for us a new adventure in the woods,—each day a revelation of the silent and eternal life of the forests. . . .

Snow was deep in the pine woods. The trunks of the trees were ebon, and the ice on the streams shone and sang strange little tunes as it cracked in the gently flowing undercurrent. Rhododendron and laurel sparkled green in the sunlight. Earth seemed dressed in bridal attire, so white and pure under the shadows of the tall trees. The air was full of anthems,—of boughs stirred by the breeze and of rivers breaking the snow. . . .

Bob and I were enjoying the snowy

peace. Snow brings with it a privacy, a sublime softness in the temple of earth. It lays Beauty's white hand upon all; it embellishes the drab, it makes the forest a noble place. There is a solemn joy in snow. It sends the spirit soaring. The silence is awesome and wonderful. Childhood awakens in the heart, and all the gay, glad images of earth return. . . . O, the thrill and enchantment of snowy glory upon the earth!

Bob, too, liked the snow. First to roll in, then to eat quantities of the delicious coolness. He seemed to share my joy,—loving the white carpet spread for his scampering paws. The patterns of the snow delighted him, and his round brown nose was busy delving in every mark, following every imprint.

I watched him romping ahead of me. How merry his spirit, and how keen his enjoyment of the woods! Did he, too, know as I, there is no happiness akin to

the forest, no peace and freedom like the temple of the trees? Who has found tranquility in the crowded thoroughfares? But in the quiet pathways there are intimations of the Infinite.

Bob was occupied with a charred stump. It fascinated him. Digging and barking, he circled about it until one section of the old tree fell apart. I heard the shrill piping of little voices, and there was a nest of baby mice, in a sheltered cranny! Bob was sniffing the lower section of the tree; in a moment he would see them. Quickly I replaced the section he had torn down, closing the nest securely with my foot. As I did so, a full-grown mouse leaped from an aperture. In a minute Bob was in pursuit. I knew he would not harm it. But the little creature was terribly alarmed. Running up a tree it peered down at us, panting with fright. I shall never forget the fearful expression of that poor little mouse. Pinched and gray, its eyes like two glassy

beads, it stood crouched upon a branch of a tree. Its gaze never wavered from Bob. It seemed turned to stone.

Bob was fascinated. He sat staring. Then he raced around the tree, leaping and barking. But the mouse never stirred. It seemed to be holding its breath. And for a long while Bob would not move. . . . Finally I prevailed upon him to go on with me, for he began to realize that his vigil was futile.

Bob and I strolled several miles. The sun was slipping behind the pine trees like a great scarlet lantern, and the snow turned from white to blue and from blue to lavender. The trunks of the trees were a deep violet in the sunset, and the silence was intense. Dusk had fallen before we returned to the scene of our little drama. I had almost forgotten. But a dog remembers. . . . As we passed a certain tree amongst the numberless ones of the forest, Bob paused. I looked upward. To my

astonishment I saw the same pathetic little mouse still perched upon the bough. It had not moved. Its eyes shone like black beads. It was still stricken with fear.

As we passed into the gathering dusk, I wondered how long the poor little creature would remain there and remember. . . .

Chapter XX

A FOX

BOB always came to my room with me when I retired and arose in the morning when I arose. He had never missed this in many years. But one night things happened differently.

A bright moon shone on the snow. "Wonderful for baiting a fox," my husband said. We had just seen footprints to the doorstep of our house. I had bought a chicken for bait, and all was ready for the encounter.

We stood discussing the event and what hour it was to take place. It was agreed that at midnight my husband should descend with the chauffeur and start on the adventure in the snow.

But there was one problem. How was

I to stifle Bob's bark, and keep him from smelling the fox as it approached?

"Keep him in your room," my husband said. So it was assumed Bob would retire with me before the appointed hour, and I should keep the windows closed. "If he barks, there will be no fox," I was told. As we finished talking, I noticed Bob lying on his paws looking up at us, half pretending to sleep. But had he been asleep? Was he listening?

We kept our guns in a corner of the room. As I passed upstairs Bob followed. But when I entered my room, I saw Bob with such a shamefaced look, slowly stealing downstairs alone. It seemed incredible. He was my shadow. He had never left me in this way before.

I paid no attention, and went on busying myself in my room. Surely he would return. But he did not come. It was very strange and unaccountable. He never remained alone.

I called. Not a sound. I closed the door and went on preparing for bed.

No Bob. After a little while I went downstairs. He was lying near the gun-rack, facing the door.

"Bob," I said sternly, "Bob, why won't you come upstairs? What is the matter?"

He opened his eyes only a little. I heard the tap, tap of his tail on the carpet. I turned him over on his back. He pretended to be in a deep sleep. I was very much amazed. Had I hurt his feelings? Was he jealous? He being a dog of no moods, I was unprepared for this strangeness.

"Bob," I said, "you are a bad dog. Why do you disobey me? Why won't you come with me?"

He did not move. He was very indifferent, yet very determined. Then I lectured him. Then I pulled him along the floor, hoping he would yield to my wishes. But

he would not follow. His mind was made up. That was all.

I went to bed. And who will smile at me when I confess I had a quiet cry alone, the first tears Bob had ever caused me. I had always called him the one perfect thing, for he had never disappointed me. Our wishes had always been in accord.

But now something had happened. In a minute everything was different.

"Bob," I said, half to myself, and half to the unpitying dark, "you have never failed me. Spaniels never do. You have always protected me. Won't you come up and look after me now?"

The little dog never stirred. And as I lay in the darkness struggling with apprehension, the solution came to me like a clear light: Bob was waiting by the guns for the fox-hunt! He had overheard our talk of "leaving him at home," (Oh, fateful, familiar words!) and of shooting and baiting the fox. His vocabulary must have

been larger than we imagine. There was no other explanation. His passion for the chase was so keen it had obliterated all else. He lay facing the door, fearful of missing the hunt, fixed and inflexible.

I understood all now. And I ceased crying. For it was splendid of him to have loved his work so much.

I dropped into a light sleep. It was a good while until midnight when the adventure was to begin.

I do not know how long I slept, but I was awakened by something stirring beside me, and a paw poking at the bed-clothes. Bob was standing by me, and in his mouth he carried one of my rubber galoshes, a special tribute of his devotion. Repentant, this was his silent apology. Little dog heart, had it suffered too for deserting me?

But at midnight, when the men came for the guns, Bob was waiting beside the gun-rack, his eyes pleading and eager. I saw

him standing by the guns, his figure proud and erect. Was he thinking of the ancient days when Kings shot game over his ancestors? Was it the royal, imperious strain in his blood calling to him from the ages?

What use was there to bait a fox now? Why follow tracks through moonlit snow when Bob had guessed the secret?

Chapter XXI

HUNTING DAYS

THE happiest days of Bob's life were hunting days. He loved the gun so much it sent him into paroxysms of delight. He was a natural game-seeker, and he had great pride in a good bit of retrieving or in following a scent.

I have never seen a dog that was such a passionate hunter. Never weary or indifferent, he was indefatigable to the end. There was never a time when he wanted to stop hunting. I think he would have hunted all day and night if we would have allowed him. If Bob made game, there was always game. No setter or pointer that hunted with us ever showed the bird-sense, or the thoroughness in quartering their ground. And many of the crack

shots of the country affirmed they had never known a dog with so remarkable a nose.

His action in the field was a delight to watch. He worked through brush where only the white spots of his body were visible, leaping over crags and gullies, his tail going at a rapid rate as he grew close on the scent, with sharp, short little intakes of breath, ("sampling the air," as we called it), and the crackling of twigs announcing his rapid search for grouse, pheasant or woodcock. Many a mountain-top was made for me a place of wonder and quivering expectation, as Bob with his quick breathing and rapid springing flushed for me a bird.

Springers work entirely by nose, never depending upon sight to locate game; and I have known him to follow a blood-scent of a wounded rabbit many hundreds of yards, finally capturing it and retrieving to hand.

Perhaps his nicest piece of work was driving a rainbow-colored pheasant from marshy cover. In this he had his greatest pride. Springers are excellent pheasant dogs. And is there any sound more thrilling than the sharp swift whirr of a pheasant's wings through the air? Wonderful it was to see Bob coming in at a canter, over a stone-wall, perhaps across a watery pool, with the scarlet and blue plumage unruffled in his mouth. He retrieved well to hand, and he often brought a live pigeon to me. The spaniel is tender-mouthed and protective.

Happy were the days which Bob and I have spent as comrades in the woods. He taught me the wonders of the forest, the silent grandeur of nature, and the quiet loveliness of earth. A dog can be the touchstone of many wonderful things: he can disclose many invisible truths. Bob has taken me into the outdoors when I would have refrained. In sleet or snow,

HUNTING DAYS

or under a great moon on a zero night, I have learned from him the thrill of the elements and the real joyousness of returning home. To sit before a glowing fire with my spaniel on the hearth,—the wind singing in the chimney, memories of the day's hunting still in my heart, game crackling on the stove;—what could be more perfect than this?

Companionship with Bob revealed to me a bigger and happier life. What forests I have penetrated where his footsteps alone beguiled me! I have learned to love the wind and the rain and the season's changes; to love better than the crowded ways of men the free, sweet, wholesome paths of Nature.

Bob and I went every autumn to a pine-bowered cabin in the Allegheny Mountains. A fresh stream bubbles from the moss, and white birch and laurel cluster about the windows. Remote from all civilization, Bob has spent here his hap-

piest hours. Wild turkey and grouse are plentiful, and baying foxes keep him in a state of delightful excitement.

Innumerable are the miles we have traversed over the vast Pennsylvania mountains, husband, gun, and dog, blissful companions, following little meandering trails or breaking the thicket, resting in the purple shadows of the hemlock groves, drinking from sweet fresh springs of water, tasting the strength of the wind and feeling our hearts leap with the wonderful joy of living. These are the treasures of existence—the unforgettable, golden gifts of experience.

Then at the end of day, to watch a red moon climb the sky, the last crack of the gun sounding down the valley; to return to a quiet, glowing cabin, happy from the beauty of the outdoors, and to sink to restful slumber,—this is to be at peace with all the world.

Chapter XXII

FAREWELL

THE dog is man's best friend. He is the only living creature that thinks more of his master than of himself. He will follow to the grave and remain faithful long afterward. He will risk his life to save. His love will endure to the end. He asks little and gives all. He is the one comrade to be trusted forever.

Dogs do not derive their nobility from association with men. Their intelligence may have advanced beyond that of other animals due to their companionship with human beings. But their qualities of loyalty, unselfishness, service, resignation and compassion are peculiar to their kind.

Dog's lives are rarely happy. At the

whim of a master who may, at any moment, send them away to another part of the world,—how uncertain and anxious must be their existence! When we leave them, what assurance have they of our return? How little certitude or peace must be theirs in their brief span of years amongst us! A short space and a nameless grave awaiting them,—so much beloved, so soon forgotten.

Unwavering friends of man, what is their reward? How kind we should be to these dumb creatures. Sent amongst us unbidden,—what gentleness and understanding we should give them,—their loyalty and patience and love, gifts we cannot value too highly in this world of ephemeral things. How sweet is the flower of their fellowship,—how rare their everlasting devotion!

None will love us as the dog. None will give to us the boundless, blind affection, forgiving us our foibles and follies. Even

in slumber we are unforgotten; our foot-step sends them trembling with happiness; our departure leaves them disconsolate. Around us their life revolves, wanting no other happiness but our presence.

O most compassionate and tenderest of creatures, O understanding heart of a little dog, divining our slightest wish, sharing our secret sorrow, wanting only to serve us with silent submission,—unknown to guile or malice,—what tributes have we that are worthy of you? What can we give you commensurate with your gifts to us?

In another world may the little dog heart know happiness and rest. Many believe that dogs inhabit heaven. I hope it is so. And in that last golden hour, when we all stand together, may we look again upon the faces of our pets, our lost devoted ones; little dog souls returned again to welcome us from the great dark Silence. . . . And how glad we shall be

to greet their patient faces in that land where dreams come true, in that realm of peace and rest where we may be once more beside our loyal comrade and friend, the dog.

MY SPRINGER SPANIEL *

Patient and wise, with wisdom born of
love,

Gentle as April winds that woo the air,
Faithful as stars within the heavens fair,
Kind as the ageless sun that shines above,
Content with little; asking not to rove,
A nature soft and mild, the will to dare
Yet never to forsake the master's care,
Brave with a courage Time alone did prove.

Why have you virtue which no men pos-
sess

Devotion unto death; the patient ways
That are not of this world,—a heart so
true

It knows not any guile or selfishness
Nor asks for favors, nor for any praise,—
O men are nobler for a friend like you!

* Prize Poem International Poetry Contest, 1926—
London, England. "Poetry Review."

